



Grade 8 History

The Development of Western Canada

Aboriginal Teaching Strategy

The Red River Rebellion

Students explore the roles of key individuals and groups in the Red River Rebellion and the impact of the conflict on the development of western Canada.

Related Curriculum Policy

- *The Ontario Curriculum: Social Studies, Grades 1 to 6; History and Geography, Grades 7 and 8, 2004*

Specific Expectations

Knowledge and Understanding

- describe the causes and results of the Red River Rebellion of 1869–70 and the North-West Rebellion of 1885, and explain the role of key individuals and groups (e.g., Louis Riel, Gabriel Dumont, the North-West Mounted Police, Thomas Scott, Big Bear, Poundmaker, General Wolseley, Catherine Schubert)

Cross-Curricular Connections

Language

Writing: Producing Drafts

- 2.8 produce revised draft pieces of writing to meet identified criteria based on the expectations (e.g., adequate development of information and ideas, logical organization, appropriate use of form and style, appropriate use of conventions)

Aboriginal Context

The Red River Rebellion was a result of the Métis' fear that the Canadian government's takeover of their land as part of Treaty #6 would disregard their traditional farms along the river.

These are some of the key Aboriginal figures involved:

- **Louis Riel**, the Métis leader, was known as the Father of Manitoba because of his work to make Manitoba a province. He was leader of the provisional government that negotiated the terms for Saskatchewan to become part of Canada.

- **Gabriel Dumont** is best known as Riel's military captain during the North West Resistance of 1885.
- **Chief Poundmaker**, the chief of the Plains Cree who allegedly signed a letter sent to Louis Riel calling for war, was convicted of treason and sent to prison.
- **Chief Big Bear**, one of the three Cree chiefs (Chief Beardy and Chief Poundmaker were the other two), was involved in the treaty negotiations relating to land claims in northern Saskatchewan. At this time, Big Bear was beginning to lose influence over the band's warrior society. Although he did not participate in the conflict led by Riel, a series of smaller battles ensued in which Big Bear's efforts to stop the massacre failed. He was brought to trial in Regina and found guilty of treason.

Teaching Strategies

- Have students write a newspaper article to describe the events leading to the Red River Rebellion, taking into consideration the role of all key individuals and groups, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.
- Use questions such as these to promote discussion: Why is the conflict referred to as the Riel Rebellion? By which government was the region governed at the time? What events led to this conflict? What issues were the basis of the conflict? What were the results of the rebellion with regard to the development of western Canada? Was there only one key individual who had a role in the rebellion? How did the rebellion lead to the establishment of the Métis Nation? How did Poundmaker's and Big Bear's people factor into the events of the rebellion? Were they part of the rebellion?

Resources

The following recommended resources and web links were accurate at the time of publication. Teachers are encouraged to check that these reference listings remain current.

Brown, Brian M. "Poundmaker, Big Bear, and the 1885 Rebellion."

<http://www.alittlehistory.com/NativeRb.htm>

A brief history of the uprising of 1885 and background on Big Bear and Poundmaker.

Gabriel Dumont. <http://library2.usask.ca/northwest/background/dumont.htm> A good descriptive page on Gabriel Dumont.

Making History: Louis Riel and the North-West Rebellion. Montreal: Monro Multimedia and National Film Board, 1998. CD-ROM and teacher's guide.

Métis National Council. <http://www.metisnation.ca>

Neering, Rosemary. *Louis Riel.* Markham, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1999. This biography of Louis Riel makes excellent use of historical documents, maps, illustrations, and archival photographs.

Stanbridge, Joanne. *Poundmaker: Peace Chief.* Don Mills, ON: Pearson Education Canada, 2005. A book about the diversity and complexity of historical events that occurred in Poundmaker's life.

Windspeaker. <http://www.ammsa.com/windspeaker>

Yanko, Dave. "Poundmaker." *Virtual Saskatchewan On-Line Magazine.*

http://www.virtualsk.com/current_issue/poundmaker.html

A very good descriptive article about Poundmaker.

Making Community Connections

- Invite a reporter from an Aboriginal newspaper (e.g., *Windspeaker*, *Anisnabek News*, *Turtle Island News*, *Métis Voyageur*) to describe to the class what kind of questions to ask when researching a story.

ABOUT THE TEACHER'S TOOLKIT

This teaching strategy is one component of *Aboriginal Perspectives: The Teacher's Toolkit*, a collection of resources designed to help Ontario educators bring Aboriginal perspectives into the classroom. Based on the revised Ontario curriculum, the collection includes resources for educators at both the elementary and secondary levels. Other resources in this series can be found on the ministry website, at www.edu.gov.on.ca.

